

WINTER 2014 NEW ENGLAND VERC

Voice of the Veteran

Coby Durham

Improvement work ultimately benefits Veterans in our system, but it can be hard to know how to capture Veterans' perspectives on the issues that we are working on. VHA offers many resources to guide staff in this work, but not in one consolidated site. New England VERC has now consolidated existing information in the field through an interactive Voice of the Veteran SharePoint site. Launching in March, users will be able to navigate to the site and find detailed information on the VISN 1 Patient Satisfaction Dashboards, the Veteran/Family Advisor Program, Facilitated Listening Sessions, and additional VOV tools (such as patient shadowing). As an example, the site features a video which shows users a step by step method to filter the information by medical center.



This site will be an essential resource to our improvement community as we work to enhance the quality, safety, and experience of care for our Veterans. Partnering with our Veterans and family members is a fundamental aspect of our improvement work and we hope this site will provide comprehensive information about the various tools that can be utilized.



Inside this Issue

Voice of the Veteran...	1
RTLS.....	2
Tools/Reports.....	2
OGC Improvement.....	3
Coop Corner.....	3,4,5
VISN 1 ESAT.....	4
VERC Seminar Series...	5
New Staff.....	5

Need engineering help or have a project idea? Submit a project request to NE VERC

New England VERC Tools and Reports

Kristine DeSotto

Several New England VERC project reports and tools have been published to our SharePoint site over the last few months.

- The Committee Coordination Toolkit provides guidance for VISN 1's Governance Committees, but can be applied to all types of committees.
- The Strategic Planning Retreat Playbook is a resource to help all types of groups run effective strategic planning meetings.
(goes with strategic planning playbook)
- Related to Logistics, we've published a report summarizing work completed in VISN 1 and with the West Roxbury (Boston Healthcare System) Logistics team.
- Lastly, we've developed a set of recommendations for Real-Time Location System (RTLS) site assessments and a guide for developing and managing a project plan in Excel.



RTLS

Jeff Danford

VA Real-Time Location System (VA RTLS)



Jeff Danford (Fellow) and Tom Rust (Staff Systems Engineer) recently completed an RTLS Site Assessment Recommendations document to be utilized by the National RTLS Office during their multiyear site assessment and installation process. Starting this summer, Hewlett Packard, contracted by the VA, will be installing RTLS (Real Time Location Software) devices in four areas of each VA Medical Center in the country—sterile processing (SPS), cardiac catheterization lab, temperature control, and asset management. The VERC's Recommendations document, drafted by Jeff and Tom after attending several site assessments and phone interviewing an SPS Chief at another facility, is meant to be used by VISN RTLS Leads at site assessments in the near future. The document includes advice for the RTLS Lead regarding whom to include at the Site Assessment, important issues to be addressed, and more. It can be found on the New England VERC external SharePoint site.

OGC Improvement

Courtney Scala

How transferable are process improvement methods across industries or professions? Can a group of attorneys benefit from introducing process improvement concepts into their daily work?

This past year, a few members from NE VERC set out to answer these questions through a unique collaboration with the VA Office of General Counsel (OGC). In OGC Region 1 (New England), employment law services represent the largest single line of business, with approximately 45% of total workload. Facing an increasing demand for legal services, flat budget projections, and concerns about potential employee burn-out, Assistant Regional Counsel Ed Carney wanted to know whether some of the improvement methods being deployed throughout his group's client facilities could be applied to his line of work. With the help of VERC team members Courtney Scala Smith, Stephanie Chan, and Jim Schlosser, the OGC Region 1 employment law group held its first-ever process improvement workshop in June 2013, followed by ongoing improvement advising throughout a 90-day implementation period.



Notable outcomes of this collaboration included an enhanced cross-referencing function in the group's case law database, leveraging virtual deposition technology to reduce attorney travel time, increasing non-attorney resources to support litigation, and enhancing the e-discovery process through improved OI&T collaboration. The success of NE VERC's collaboration with the Region 1 team has been recognized at the national OGC level, and this project has resulted in a great success for the team. Just as

importantly, we learned that process improvement concepts and tools are indeed applicable across fields and can benefit any team, even one full of lawyers!

Coop Corner

Mental Health Clinic

Hanley Kui

In order to improve care to Veterans in Mental Health , we are currently working on the creation of a form that will collect quantitative data to measure patient mood, relationship with clinician, etc. This data will then be compiled and can be viewed by the clinician using a tool that will graphically display the collected data over time. One of the tool's unique functions will be its ability to highlight areas of concern based on the collected data.



VISN 1 ESAT

Jordan Peck

It is no secret, healthcare systems are getting bigger and more complex. Systems Engineers have introduced many methods for understanding and controlling large systems and these methods are now being adapted to organizations. Leveraging the New England VERC's relationship with MIT's Lean Advancement Initiative, VISN 1 leadership has pursued the integration of the Enterprise Strategic Analysis for Transformation (ESAT) framework (Lean.mit.edu) into its strategic planning process. Since the beginning of the VERC/MIT relationship the ESAT has been applied to many levels of VISN 1 and VA Boston, as MIT student projects led by MIT Graduate Student Jordan Peck (now a VERC Engineer). The ESAT framework is a simple yet effective method for breaking down an enterprise into four main components: Metrics, Processes, Stakeholders and Strategic Objectives. Over the course of 8 steps, the users of the ESAT are provided with many tools for gaining a complete understanding of their enterprise and generate a transformation plan. In a full commitment to the methodology, the VISN 1 Network Director designated leaders from across the VISN administration, medical centers and service lines to work through the framework in 6 full day sessions over six months, coached by MIT's Prof. Deborah Nightingale, who literally wrote the book on the method (Beyond the Lean Revolution – available via TMS/Books24x7). The effort was managed by a team from the New England VERC and resulted in a comprehensive report of the VISN 1 current state, which has been well received by VISN leadership. Now the effort continues on as leaders begin to discuss future states and transformation plans... so stay tuned!

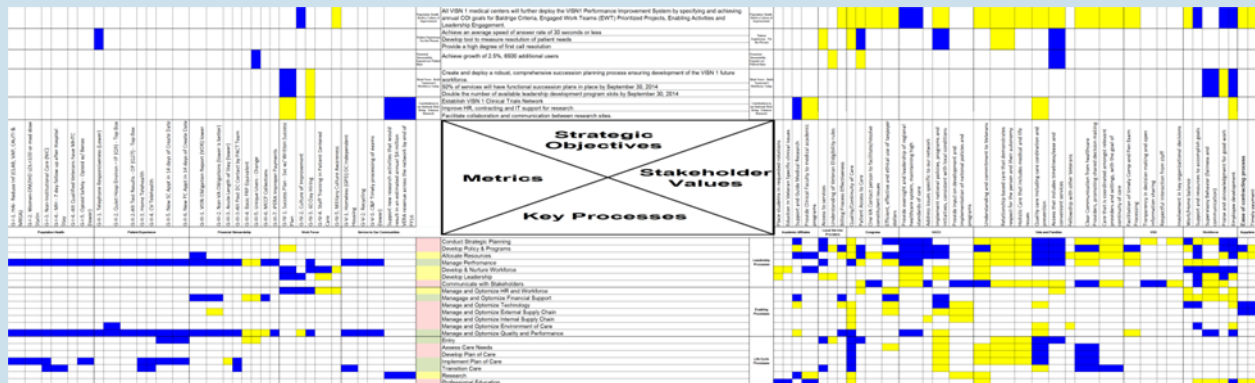


Figure 1 High level picture of the VISN 1 ESAT X-Matrix

Coop Corner

Engaged Work Teams

Amanda Levy

One project I am working on is improvements to the tracking and certification of Engaged Work Teams in VISN 1. The teams are the building blocks of our culture of improvement and they apply for bronze, silver, and gold certification. We are working with Systems Redesign POCs to understand how to make the process more efficient. Specifically, I am helping to implement improvements to enable teams to receive their certificates more quickly after they have been reviewed.



New Staff

William Lukesh *Industrial Engineer*

Bill is coming to the VERC from the Bedford VAMC where he provided teams with Systems Redesign/Lean training and support for the past year.

Amanda Levy *Engineering Coop*

Amanda Levy is a sophomore industrial engineering student at Northeastern University. This is her first coop and she is very excited to work at NE VERC!

Hanley Kui *Business Coop*

Hanley Kui is a third year supply chain management and information systems student at Northeastern University. This will be his second coop.

Jerry Kim *Engineering Coop*

Jerry is a sophomore Industrial Engineering major with a Business Administration minor at Northeastern University. This is Jerry's first coop.

New England VERC Seminar Series

Hanley Kui

January 17

Dr. Nan Kong and Ramez Ayoub presented a tool that could:

1. Estimate the probability of 30-day readmissions using patient data
2. Suggest most appropriate interventions for the patient
3. Estimate cost/benefit of implementation
4. Perform "what if" analysis

February 14

Eva Enns showed how network science could be used in infectious disease control policies, focusing on:

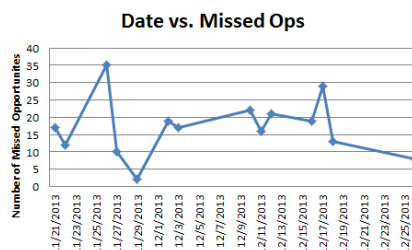
1. Incorporating network structure into the modeling and evaluation of IDC policies
2. Leveraging network structure in the design of policies that best control the spread of infectious disease

Coop Corner

Missed Opportunities

Jerry Kim

I am assisting the Ophthalmology Clinic to better understand and analyze their missed opportunities, by collecting information about no-show, cancellations, and patients leaving without completing the appointment on a weekly basis. With this data, I am creating visual displays (run charts) to help them identify and understand the sources of missed opportunities, prior to developing solutions. I will then work with the team to begin PDSA's using the Missed Opportunities toolkit.



Dr. Nan Kong
Purdue University



Ramez Ayoub



Eva Enns
University of Minnesota

The next seminar will be on Friday, March 7 from 12:00 to 1:00 EST.

PowerPoints from previous seminars can be found on NE VERC's SharePoint page. Email NewEnglandVERC@va.gov to be added to the Seminar Series mailing list.